



# Arizona Focus



Volume 4 Issue 2

Summer 2016

## Change in Distribution of Newsletters

As stated in the spring 2016 edition of the AZ Chapter FOCUS newsletter, the distribution has changed with this edition. The NRLN FOCUS newsletter with this AZ Chapter insert is being mailed to those AZ Chapter members who have made a contribution to the NRLN and **do not** have an email address. An email will be sent to the AZ Chapter members that have an email address to notify them when the NRLN FOCUS is available at [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org) and the AZ Chapter newsletter is available on the Chapter webpage. If you know of others who do not have an email address, be sure to share with them the NRLN Contribution Form printed at the end of this newsletter.

## Couldn't Leave the NRLN

I had also shared in the last newsletter that I was resigning the first of May and asked for volunteers to take my place. Well...no one volunteered. I ended up taking a "leave of absence" for a while due to some personal issues. The work the many volunteers of the NRLN do is too important to all retirees. So, I am back. I have decided I just can't leave the NRLN.

## NRLN Is Working for You

The NRLN is working so hard to protect your earned benefits and tackle the rising cost of prescription drugs. It supports the passing of legislation that would allow safe prescription drug importation from Canada, competitive bidding for prescription drugs by Medicare, and adequate FDA funding to accelerate generic drug sales and eliminate non-competitive practices in the prescription drug industry.

Is Social Security a key part of your retirement income? The NRLN is on record of saying the Social Security tax rate on workers and employers should be increased and the taxed income cap should be raised until the Social Security Trust is fully funded. And the Trust should be made standalone and its resources should not be loaned to fund other federal government budgets.

What about the future of Medicare? Some members of Congress, led by the Speaker of the House, have continually said they want to privatize Medicare. The NRLN opposes conversion to a voucher system because open health care market costs are projected to exceed coverage at an accelerating rate thereby grossly adding to the individual premiums and copays.

## CenturyLink Pension Annual Funding Notice

Probably the most important to those of you who are receiving a monthly pension from CenturyLink (CTL) is making Congress aware of the issues surrounding companies off-loading their pension funds to an annuity. The NRLN AZ Chapter asked Bill Kadereit, President of NRLN, to review CTL's Annual Funding Notice (AFN) issued in April 2015. Bill determined that your Qwest Pension Plan was combined with CTL's employee plan and Embarq's plan at the end of 2013. This action caused what was the Qwest Legacy Pension Plan's funding level to drop, causing greater risk. Again this year, Bill did a complete evaluation of the CenturyLink pension. The Fair Market Value of the combined plans at the end of 2014 was 86.8%.

Keep in mind that the information you received is 16 months old, which is allowed by the government. So, we do not know the current funding level of the plan as of the end of 2015. We will not know that level until next April. The NRLN leadership has had face-to-face meetings with Congressional Committee staffs and leaders of the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corp. to make changes to the AFN for it to be more understandable.

## NRLN President Speaks at Capitol Rally

Bill Kadereit spoke at an April 14, 2016 rally at the U.S. Capitol where 4,000 participants in the Central States Pension Fund protested the proposal to cut their pension benefits and called on Congress for a solution. On Friday, May 6, the Treasury Department rejected the proposal from the Central States Pension Fund, which would have substantially cut pension benefits to nearly 400,000 retirees in the multiemployer pension plan.

(Over)

In other words, The Treasury Department's rejection provides Central States Pension Fund retirees more time to continue to lobby Congress for legislation that could protect their pension fund. Why did Bill speak at the rally? To protect us retirees of single employer companies from being targeted next.

### **Mimi Hull to Meet with CenturyLink Vice President**

Mimi Hull, former President of AUSWR, has advised us that she will be attending a meeting with the Vice President of HR for CenturyLink to discuss extending the YSA payment for post 1991 management Medicare eligible retirees and their spouses. The meeting will take place the first week of August and the outcome will be reported as soon as information is available.

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Now another connection to each other may be in jeopardy because CTL has announced they will no longer be able to support the Telephone Pioneer organization. Hopefully, the Pioneers will be able to continue without the support of CTL, but it will be a major endeavor.

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### **Supreme Court Sends Case Back to Fifth Circuit Court**

You may have read or heard about the Lee/Pundt vs. Verizon case appealed to the Supreme Court. It has been remanded back to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. At first, it seemed that the case was predicated on how the 41,000 were selected for carving out of their pension plan, stipulating that it was discriminatory to select some and not others. However, now it appears the action by the Supreme Court has to do with the suit filed by the remaining 50,000 pensioners for mismanagement by the fiduciary of the plan during and after the offer. It will most likely be tied up with legal activities for at least another year. We are watching this case very closely.

### **Conference Call – October 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M.**

Our next conference call to give you up-to-date information that is important to you will be:

**October 17<sup>th</sup> 2016** (this call is open to anyone and there is no charge for the call)

**Time: 7:00 p.m.** (Mountain Standard Time – AZ Time)

**Call-in 1-800-503-2899**

**Access No. 6876157#** (When asked for your code, make sure to enter the # sign.)

Martha Deahl, President  
NRLN AZ Chapter  
602-672-6262

**What can you do to help the NRLN?** Become an NRLN Individual Member and tell your friends to join the NRLN by sending in the following form with your contribution. We all need to stay informed!

*Cut*

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### **National Retiree Legislative Network - Arizona Chapter Membership Form**

*The NRLN is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Contributions are not tax deductible.*

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **UNDER 55:** \_\_\_\_\_ **55-64:** \_\_\_\_\_ **65 OR OVER**

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **: ZIP+4** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-MAIL ADDR. (IF AVAILABLE):** \_\_\_\_\_

**I get my pension check from** \_\_\_\_\_ **(name of company)**

**Years Retired** \_\_\_\_\_

**I am a member of** \_\_\_\_\_  
**NRLN Chapter**

Mail this form with your check or money order (no cash please) for \$25, \$50, \$75 or more (any amount will be appreciated) payable to **NRLN, Inc., P. O. Box 18757, Washington, D.C. 20036-8757**